

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 07474

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP, ,INT, SS, US
SUBJECT: CODEL BYRD: SENATOR BYRD'S CONVERSATION WITH
PRIME MINISTEE SUAREZ

1. SENATOR BYRD MET FOR OVEE AN HOUR WITH PPIME MINISTER SUAREZ ON JULY 1, ACCOMMANIED BY THE CHARGE AND MEMBERS OF THE SENATOR'S STAFF. SENATOR BYRD BEGAN BY EXPRESSING PRESIDENT CARTER'S REGRETS AT NOT HAVING BEEN ABLE TO VISIT SPAIN YET AND BY SAYING ON BEHALF OF PRESIDENT CARTEE AND OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS HOW MUCH ADMIRATION THERE WAS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR THE CONTINUING DEMOCRATIC PPOCESS IN SPAIN, FOR THE ROLE THAT SPAIN PLAYS IN WESTERN DEFENSE AND FOR THE MANY DIFFICULT DECISIONS -- INCLUDING THOSE RELATING TO ECONOMIC STABILIZATION -- THAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT IS TAKING. HE ASKED PPIME MINISTER SUAREZ TO GIVE HIM A VIEW ON WHEN THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM WOULD OCCUR AND WHAT WOULD BE THE PRINCIPAL ISSUES THEREAFTEE WITHIN SPAIN.

2. PPIME MINISTEE SUAREZ THANKED SENATOR BYRD FOR THE ADMIRATION AND SUPPORT THAT HE EXPRESSED, BOTH AS AN EMISSARY OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS. HE EXPRESSED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD NOT YET COME TO SPAIN AND SAID IN THIS CONNECTION THAT THERE IS NO COUNTRY THAT IS MORE CLOSELY ALLIED WITH THE UNITED STATES OR MORE DEFINITELY IN THE WESTERN
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CAMP THAN IS SPAIN. YET THE PRESIDENT HAD NOT YET FOUND TIME TO COME FOR A VISIT.

3. SUAREZ WENT ON TO SAY THAT VIRTUALLY ALL HIS EFFORTS ARE NOW DEDICATED TO CONTINUING THE PROCESS OF GETTING ALL PARTIES IN SPAIN TO PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE LEADING UP TO A SUCCESSFUL REFERENDUM ON THE CONSTITUTION IN OCTOBER.

AFTER THE REFERENDUM THERE INEVITABLY WILL BE A CHANGE IN HOW THINGS ARE TO BE DEALT WITH IN SPAIN. FOLLOW-ON ECONOMIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS AFTER THE TERMINATION OF THE MONCLOA PACT IN DECEMBER. MORE THAN 50 NEW LAWS WILL BE NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT ASPECTS OF THE CONSTITUTION. THESE ECONOMIC ARRANGEMENTS AND THESE LAWS WILL NEED A STRONG GOVERNMENT AS OF NOW, THE GOVERNMENT HAS THE ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF THE TWO HOUSES OF CONGRESS NEEDED TO AVOID A VOTE OF CENSURE. AFTER THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM A VOTE OF CENSURE COULD BE PASSED IN THE LOWER HOUSE ALONE, WHERE THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY. THERE ARE THREE POSSIBILITIES TO BREAK THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TEMPORARINESS, AS IS ESSENTIAL: (1) A NEW THREE-YEAR MONCLOA PACT; (2) A COALITION WITH ONE OF THE OTHER PARTIES TO PROVIDE A SOLID MAJORITY; OR (3) AN EARLY NATIONAL ELECTION WITH OR WITHOUT MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. HE COULD LIVE WITH ANY OF THOSE POSSIBILITIES IN PRINCIPLE. BUT THE LEAST DESIRABLE ALTERNATIVE SO FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED WAS A COALITION WITH EITHER THE SOCIALISTS OR THE ALIANZA POPULAR, BECAUSE A UCD COALITION WITH THE SOCIALISTS WOULD SERVE TO CONFUSE PEOPLE IDEOLOGICALLY, AND A COALITION WITH THE ALIANZA POPULAR WOULD SERVE TO INDICATE TO PEOPLE THAT THE UCD WAS FURTHER TO THE RIGHT THAN IT ACTUALLY WAS. IF ELECTIONS WERE HELD HE WAS SURE THAT THEIR RESULTS WOULD BE RESPECTED. WHAT HE WAS NOT SURE

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OF WAS THAT THEY WOULD YIELD A CAPABLE GOVERNMENT. GOVERNING SPAIN WAS STILL A VERY DIFFICULT AND DELICATE TASK THAT REQUIRED FULL MEASURES OF AUDACITY, PRUDENCE, AND SUBTLETY.

4. SENATOR BYRD THEN SPOKE ABOUT THE UNITED STATES SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT AND SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THE PRESS REPORTS ABOUT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE UNITED STATES EXECUTIVE WERE EXAGGERATED. HE CONTINUED THAT HE EXPECTED PRESIDENT CARTER TO GAIN IN ELECTORAL STRENGTH WHEN SOME OF THE DIFFICULT INITIATIVES THAT HE WAS TAKING CAME TO FRUITION AND TO CONTINUE THROUGH A SECOND TERM. MOREOVER, HE SAID THAT THE CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT WERE COMPLETELY TOGETHER ON THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE.

5. PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT HE CONSIDERED HIMSELF A FRIEND OF PRESIDENT CARTER, HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY HIS INNER CONFIDENCE AND WAS PLEASED TO HEAR SENATOR BYRD'S STATEMENTS OF OPTIMISM.

6. PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ THEN EXPRESSED HIS OWN CONCERNS

ABOUT EUROPE. HE SAID THAT THE EUROPE OF TODAY LACKS STRONG IDEOLOGICAL LEADERSHIP AND THEREFORE IS TENDING TOWARD MARXISM. THE EUROCOMMUNISTS WERE CREATING AN IMAGE OF MODERATION AND EFFICIENCY. YET ONE HAD TO ASK WHETHER, IF THEY CAME TO POWER, THEY WOULD LATER BE WILLING TO GIVE UP POWER IF THEY LOST AT THE BALLOT BOX. HE

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DID NOT BELIEVE THAT THEY WOULD AND HE BELIEVED THAT THEY WERE STILL MEMBERS OF AN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL GROUPING BEHOLDEN TO THE USSR. YET HE FOUND LITTLE ECHO IN HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH EUROPEAN LEADERS TO HIS STRONG FEELING THAT EUROPEANS OF THE CENTER MUST DEFEND THEIR PRINCIPLES AND IDEOLOGY. HE IS CONCERNED IN THE CASE OF SPAIN WITH THE FACT THAT IN MID-1977, ALTHOUGH MOST OF SPAIN WAS CLEARLY NOT MARXIST, VIRTUALLY 50 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO VOTED HAD IN EFFECT VOTED FOR MARXISM. THIS MUST RESULT FROM A REMARKABLY EFFECTIVE COMMUNIST CAMPAIGN IN UNIVERSITIES, OTHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND THE MEDIA. HE WAS COMMITTED TO WORKING TO DEFEND A FREE IDEOLOGY.

7. SENATOR BYRD ASKED PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ WHAT THE UNITED STATES MIGHT DO TO SUPPORT SPANISH DEMOCRACY BEYOND WHAT IT WAS ALREADY DOING. PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ RESPONDED THAT IT SHOULD CONTINUE DOING JUST WHAT IT WAS ALREADY DOING AND ALSO: (1) COLLABORATE IN THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON TERRORISTS AND TERRORISM; (2) HELP ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT IN SPAIN TO HELP RESSORE ECOOMIC GROWTH AND PROVIDE JOBS; AND (3) PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN THE MODERNIZATION OF THE SPANISH MILITARY FORCES, A SUBJECT THAT UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD COME UP AGAIN IN THE AFTERNOON'S CONVERSATION WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE GUTIERREZ MELLADO.

8. IN RESPONSE TO A SEPARATE QUESTION REGARDING A RECENT
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TRIP TO MOROCCO, PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ COMMENTED THAT SPAIN HAD TREATED MOROCCO BADLY HISTORICALLY AND THAT HE HIMSELF HAD HAD TENSE MOMENTS WITH KING HASSAN OVER THEIR DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF DEMOCRACY DURING HASSAN'S VISIT TO MADRID SOME MONTHS AGO. HOWEVER, HIS VISIT TO MOROCCO EARLY IN THE WEEK HAD DONE MUCH TO CLEAR THE AIR AND HE HOPED IT WOULD LEAD TO MORE POSITIVE RELATIONS IN THE FUTURE.

9. PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ CLOSED BY ASKING THAT A MESSAGE OF FRIENDSHIP AND RESPECT BE TRANSMITTED FROM THE KING TO PRESIDENT CARTER, AS WELL AS HIS OWN ASSURANCES OF PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP. HE CONTINUED THAT THE UNITED STATES DID NOT KNOW HOW MANY FRIENDS IT HAD IN SPAIN AND THAT HE HIMSELF WAS PERSONALLY COMMITTED TO CLOSE AND ACTIVE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. SPAIN WAS A YOUNG COUNTRY, 70 PERCENT OF WHOSE PEOPLE WERE UNDER FORTY. IT NO LONGER WOULD BE PASSIVE IN WORLD AFFAIRS. IT WOULD PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE AS ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT COUNTRIES OF EUROPE. HIS POLITICAL PARTY DID NOT BELIEVE IN NEUTRALISM FOR SPAIN. IT BELIEVED THAT SPAIN SHOULD BE WITHIN THE WESTERN DEFENSE SYSTEM WITH SOME ADJUSTMENTS TO TAKE CARE OF SPAIN'S SPECIAL RELATIONS WITH ARAB AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES. IT THUS WOULD CONTINUE AS A CLOSE AND COMMITTED ALLY OF THE US.

10. COMMENT: SENATOR BYRD HAS SEEN THIS MESSAGE IN DRAFT. SENATOR BYRD DELIBERATELY DID NOT RAISE NATO AND THUS WAS ABLE TO DEAL QUICKLY AFTERWARDS WITH PRESS INCLINATION TO PLAY THIS AS A VISIT TO PRESSURE SPAIN TO ENTER NATO BY SAYING THE SUBJECT SIMPLY DIDN'T COME UP. SUAREZ WAS IMPRESSIVE IN HIS PRESENTATION OF THE ISSUES BEFORE HIM INTERNALLY AND OF SPAIN'S COMMITMENT TO FRIENDSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE ALSO WAS IMPRESSIVE IN
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HIS REITERATION OF THE POINT HE HAS MADE IN THE PAST REGARDING YOUNG SPAIN'S NATURAL ROLE OF GREATER LEADERSHIP IN THE FUTURE. EATON

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